

# International Academic Exchange in Nursing Graduate Studies: Experience Report

## Intercâmbio Acadêmico Internacional na Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem: Relato de Experiência

Luana Prado Figueredo<sup>1</sup>, Maria de Fatima do Prado Fernandes<sup>2</sup>, Osmany Alonso Ayala<sup>3</sup>

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# REVISA

1. Universidade Anhembi Morumbi. Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
2. Universidade de São Paulo. Escola de Enfermagem. São Paulo, Brazil.
3. Universidad Del Ciencias Médicas de La Havana, Facultad de Enfermería Lidia Doce, Havana, Cuba.

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### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** descrever a experiência discente acerca da mobilidade internacional acadêmica em um programa de intercâmbio em Havana - Cuba, na área de pós-graduação em enfermagem. **Método:** relato de experiência acerca das vivências acadêmicas e pessoais, decorridas durante as atividades realizadas no intercâmbio acadêmico entre Brasil e Cuba entre setembro e outubro de 2018. **Resultados:** a experiência possibilitou a aquisição de conhecimentos científicos ampliados à enfermagem no âmbito da pós-graduação e a formação de vínculos acadêmicos, propiciando o aperfeiçoamento na formação acadêmica, sócio-crítico-cultural e pessoal, a partir da inter-relação teoria-prática. Isso contribui para formação de habilidades interpessoais e profissionais permeadas por aspectos influenciadores e humanista ao cuidado de enfermagem e para o processo de internacionalização do curso de enfermagem. **Conclusão:** a experiência do intercâmbio acadêmico internacional contribui para o amadurecimento pessoal, científico e profissional e este relato visa incentivar os estudantes a idealizarem tal possibilidade que agrega novos saberes acadêmicos. **Descritores:** Intercâmbio Educacional Internacional; Educação Superior; Educação em Enfermagem.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** describe the student experience about international academic mobility in a postgraduate nursing exchange program in Havana - Cuba. **Method:** experience report about the academic and personal experiences, which took place during the activities carried out in the academic exchange between Brazil and Cuba, from September to October 2018. **Results:** the experience made possible the acquisition of expanded scientific knowledge to nursing in the post-graduation and the formation of academic bonds, providing the improvement in the academic, socio-critical-cultural and personal formation, from the theory-practice interrelationship. Contributing to the formation of interpersonal and professional skills permeated by influential and humanistic aspects of nursing care and the internationalization process of the nursing course. **Conclusion:** the experience of international academic exchange contributes to personal, scientific and professional maturation and this report aims to encourage students to idealize such a possibility that adds new academic knowledge. **Descriptors:** International Educational Exchange; Education, Higher; Education Nursing.

## Introduction

International educational exchange is defined as an exchange of knowledge, which is generally permitted by dialogues on knowledge of common interest between students and professionals from academic backgrounds in different countries. It can still be sponsored by any organization that has supported additional education.<sup>1</sup>

Internationalization has encouraged higher level academic institutions to create spaces, build conditions and take initiatives to expand academic mobility that responds to the educational needs that accompany the globalized world.<sup>2</sup>

Academic mobility is seen as a potential strategy to enable the dissemination of knowledge through international cooperation, permeated by actions of teaching, research, extension, publication and interinstitutional exchange. And in accordance with the institutional commitments and objectives, together they go along with the ascension purposes of their surroundings, the society.<sup>3-4</sup>

In this sense, internationalization still hopes to encourage and qualify the autonomy of student-faculty-researchers from the opportunities of intercultural socialization and from a context of educational, humanistic and transformative formation, which enables them to be more qualified, differentiated and more aware of complexities. human.<sup>5-7</sup> On the other hand, it consolidates the ability to strengthen exchanges between academic institutions, and encourages scientific-intellectual production from the perspective of contributing to social development and sensitivity, in a context of action, in different countries.<sup>2,4</sup>

For this reason, this study, about the experiences in an international academic exchange of postgraduate nursing, aims to contribute to the availability of information, as it realizes the lack of a more accessible and wide dissemination about the possibilities of such experience and the incentive. for students to look at international academic exchange as a way to relate humanistically, improve their knowledge and qualify as a professional in a challenging work context.

Based on the foregoing, we aimed to describe the student experience about international academic mobility in an exchange program in Havana - Cuba, in the area of postgraduate nursing. We highlight the activities carried out, personal experiences, scientific contacts and activities developed during the period of this exchange, which justifies the study.

## Method

Descriptive study of the author's type of experience report of academic and personal experiences, conducted in the international academic exchange, between September and October 2018. It took place in the postgraduate program of the Faculty of Nursing Lidia Doce, University of Medical Sciences of Havana, Cuba (FELD-UCM-H).

This experience was mobilized by the student's personal interest, family support and thesis advisor and the consent of the universities involved. The funding was partially made possible by the scholarship of the Social Demand Program of the Higher Education Personal Improvement Coordination (CAPES) and, in part, by the student's own resources.

## Results and Discussion

The decision for the academic exchange took place in the last semester of the Doctorate Course at the University of São Paulo School of Nursing (EEUSP), Brazil, when I was a CAPES scholarship student two months ago. The opportunity came through a nurse friend from Angola, who had gone through the experience during his PhD and this intermediated the contact with FELD.

In contact with FELD, through the postgraduate professor and international exchange tutor, it was possible to know that the activity plan can be shaped according to the thematic area of the student's scientific research.

Another positive aspect is the flexibility regarding the workload and period for the exchange. It is believed that this is a differential point considering that there are postgraduate students who are workers who are interested in living such an experience and have short periods to opt for extracurricular academic activities.

In accordance with the academic internationalization program proposal, the FELD graduate department sent a letter of consent by e-mail. And the Department of International Relations communicated the process of administrative proceedings requesting a documentation of student enrollment of the doctoral course, made official by EEUSP, summary of the research thesis, home address, curriculum, passport, academic visa and yellow fever vaccination certificate.

The authorization of the academic visa is included in the administrative processing by FELD. Since the documentation requested by the international relations department is made available by the student, the university provides the application to the Havana Ministry of Higher Education. After approved, it informs the Cuban Consulate of Brazil and the university about the release of Cuban academic visa. This gives the student access to universities and health services in the country. Thus, as the application for the academic visa is also available for the use of student accommodation with food in its facilities.

However, it should be noted that undergraduate foreign students, according to Cuba's rules for academic internationalization, are required to participate in their activities and make use of student accommodation. Although it does not merit discussion, it should be clarified that this context differs from the rules for Cuban students, whose education and resource demands are free.

Faced with this scenario, I expressed my interest and obtained consent to experience such experience from the doctoral thesis advisor and the head of the EEUSP Department of Nursing Management, in which I am enrolled as a student of the course.

During the exchange at FELD, it was possible to attend conferences given by postgraduate professors and immersed in the main lines of scientific research in nursing, in doctoral defenses and pre-defenses, in a meeting of the graduate commission, in undergraduate classes, parent meeting for undergraduate students, in inaugural class for *latu sensu* program tickets.

The conferences covered subjects related to the subject of scientific research of doctoral student, epistemology, humanism, transculturality and scientific methodology. They also covered the scenario of evidence related to the importance and results of research in masters and doctorates, in health science, developed with the academic institutions of Cuba and in an international context.

In these spaces it has become evident that investigations on the dimension of spirituality, religiosity and transculturality are poorly developed in the field of postgraduate nursing research, as the search for nurses who want to research these phenomena is inexpressive.

Even though such dimensions are existential with nursing care, considering that somehow patients may present their spirituality and religious demands during the process of illness and receiving health care, the nursing professional's attention to the patient and family, It is still not significant and valued within health services.

As for the experience and perception about the activities, they were permeated by dialectical methods and enriched by aggregate discussions of problematizing elements. The moderators demonstrated their intention to migrate the student's position from listener to active subject in discussions in all activities. This enabled interaction with researchers and professionals working with humanistic care, contributing to the understanding of the current scenario of investigations, implications and possibilities about the dimension of spirituality in holistic nursing care.

The incorporation of the active subject contributed to a better critical reflection on the importance of this dialogue in the context of internationalization, in order to broaden understanding and make nursing in different socio-critical-scientific contexts, in which nurses are educators and transformers in the fields. teaching, assistance and research.

From the shared experiences emerged reflections on the political and social realities that nursing care practices take place, and on how much they are still incipient in dialogues about the dimension of spirituality as a requirement for the contemplation of genuine holistic care. Therefore, spaces and dialogues need to be expanded, as they are fundamental to qualify the nurse as a professional able to deal with the health-disease process in a humanistic way in which, in fact, the patient is identified and cared for as a central element from the nurses. their references that demand to be important, such as values, beliefs, thoughts, family, and so on.

However, a challenge I can cite is that the experience of academic exchange made it possible to understand that, regardless of the different political, economic and social contexts, nursing still needs to advance in discussions about the practice of holistic nursing care, that is, humanized, which contemplates elements of the dimension of spirituality and interculturality.

It is believed that a possibility to offer spaces for technical-scientific discussions, either through the creation of study groups, research and their insertion in the internationalization process of postgraduate nursing. With the development of projects, the construction and dissemination of knowledge will lead to the formation and instrumentalization of professionals who constantly deal with the challenge of offering humanized care, that is, based on the humanistic values of the patient and family and from a holistic perspective<sup>(5-6)</sup>.

The opportunity to experience and learn in a different place and culture favors the student's perception as a nurse, having other perspectives that may directly influence professional practice. The experience of academic internationalization has the potential to make participants better prepared to work in the face of adversities inherent to nurses' daily life, as it broadens their view from a local perspective, to a more socio-critical, international and global

perspective. This favors a growing process of personal and professional maturation and achieves autonomy for life as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

The construction of this knowledge and the feasibility of integrating it with the constant changes observed in the care contexts requires a comparison with the scientific studies under development, but undoubtedly promoting the exchange of experiences with the professionals of that environment, which will contribute to the recognition of new intrinsic knowledge of the profession, for the respective care context.<sup>6</sup> From this, the concept of holistic care will be reframed and nurses will be given new competences and responsibilities that can be shared with other health professionals, in the universe of the principle of interdisciplinarity, regardless of their sociocultural context.

## Conclusion

The academic experience in Cuba allowed the researcher academic, personal and social growth. The conquest of friendships, the observation of the way of living and the conviviality, the contact with the Spanish language, the independence and adaptation of the habits in another country, were important experiences and overcoming reached during this period.

In addition, it provided an opportunity to understand how to do nursing in the culture and functioning model of the Cuban health system.

In line with the objectives of academic internationalization and investment in the technical-scientific field that aims to contribute to the advancement and visibility of nursing, this article was built and forwarded for publication and presentation of colloquia.

Sharing this experience is intended to prompt graduate students to participate in academic exchange programs as an opportunity for mobility and personal and professional transformation.

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**Correspondent Author**

Luana Prado Figueiredo.  
125 Oswaldo Diniz St. Jd. Satélite. ZIP: 04815-330. Sao  
Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil.  
[luanapra@alumni.usp.br](mailto:luanapra@alumni.usp.br)